

VZCZCXRO8685
PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHLN
RUEHLZ RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHIT #1049/01 3451045
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 111045Z DEC 07
FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
TO RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7738
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA PRIORITY 2326

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ISTANBUL 001049

SIPDIS

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

USDOC FOR 6000/ITA/OEE/RATHKE
USDOC FOR 3140/CLINE/GUERRO/ANDERSON
USDOC FOR 3133/FCS/EUROPE/BREIDENSTINE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EINV](#) [ETRD](#) [SENV](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: THE AKP BRINGS WATER TO ISTANBUL

REF: ANKARA 685

ISTANBUL 00001049 001.2 OF 002

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED, PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

11. (U) Prime Minister Erdogan presided over the official opening of the Melen Project, a massive endeavor to provide residents of Istanbul with sufficient water. This project diverts water from the Melen River and pipes it about 150 km westward to Istanbul. The ceremony celebrated the completion of the first phase; however two additional phases will be needed to meet the city's water needs in the coming decades. The project provides an opportunity for U.S. firms, noticeably absent from major water projects in Istanbul. Justice and Development Party (AKP) officials will likely highlight this project as a success story in the lead up to local elections, roughly 15 months away.

Erdogan Turns on the Tap

12. (U) Prime Minister Erdogan proudly boasted that Istanbul does not face the threat of a water shortage at the official opening ceremony for the Melen water project. At the ceremony launching the first phase of the Melen Project in Istanbul on December 2 the Prime Minister credited himself for initiating this project. According to Erdogan, the city only had a 60-day reserve of water when he became Mayor of Istanbul in 1994; however due to efforts begun while he was in office this problem is now solved.

The Melen Project

13. (U) The Melen Project redirects water from the Melen River located in Duzce province, roughly halfway between Istanbul and Ankara. A network of about 150 km of pipes carries the water to the Asian side of Istanbul, refilling reservoirs that are being depleted by current usage. To get the water to the more populous European side, a 5,551 meter long pipe will be laid under the Bosphorus. The recently completed first phase will supply 268 million cubic meters of water per year, and by the end of third phase about 1180 million cubic meters will be provided to Istanbul annually, enough to meet the city's expected water needs until 2040. The city of Istanbul and the central government jointly administer this project, sharing the USD 2 billion price tag.

14. (U) Extracting water from the Melen River is creating new pressures for water treatment to meet EU water quality standards. Press reports note over 90 percent of the factories on the Melen River do not have adequate water treatment facilities. The State Water Works Administration (DSI) has given firms up to four months to install new waste water facilities or face stiff fines. Furthermore Professor Saatci, an advisor to the Istanbul Water Administration told Poloff growth of illegal squatter settlements are also complicating treatment efforts and. stressed the need to begin work immediately on the second phase of Melen to avoid potential future water shortages.

Opportunity for American Firms

15. (SBU) Saatci noted U.S. firms were noticeably absent from Istanbul water projects. French, German, Italian, and Japanese firms have dominated the manufacturing and services market for this field in Istanbul, reducing the pool of vendors for the municipality to choose from. Saatci indicated he was eager to use U.S. products; in early December he plans to travel to New York with Mevlut Vural, the General Director of the Istanbul Water Authority, to research potential American products. Saatci mentioned that he was impressed with American technology, and that U.S. firms, particularly water treatment equipment manufacturers, are missing an opportunity to do business in Turkey.

Comment

(SBU) Even before the completion of the first phase of the Melen Project, Istanbul was able to escape the water rationing that Ankara citizens suffered last summer (reftel).

ISTANBUL 00001049 002.2 OF 002

The Melen Project will help ensure that the city has sufficient quantities of water for years to come. Successfully supplying Turkey's largest city with water will surely be highlighted by Justice and Development (AKP) officials in the run-up to the March 2009 local elections.
End Comment.

WIENER